**GOOD FRIDAY HOMILY: Fr Abraham, Waterside parish**

**Isaiah 52/13 -53/12, Heb.4/14-16;5/7-9 , Jn.18/1-19/42**

Good Friday is a reminder, that innocent people also could be crucified. Good Friday is a Possibility/Opportunity that anyone is able to withstand suffering patiently will be with Jesus in the Paradise. In my childhood I studied a story which was written by a writer who was not a Christian. There was a shepherd who loved His flock and was in search of Green pastures for them. His search was a very difficult one because the draught made things very difficult. The life of the flock was very bad and the shepherd was so concerned. A ghost appeared before him and said, if you give me a lamb every day, I will provide you with water and green grass. The shepherd looked at each of his flock and was terrified with the thought of losing even one of them, so they went ahead. He moved on to the deserted place, suddenly a strange creature came before him and said, I will give you the green grass and water for the flock if only you give me two sheep every day. The sheep that were distraught by the struggle said, you sell us to him so that our young ones may live. The young ones objected and said, you sell us in return and let our mothers live. The shepherd was helpless but none of the proposals were agreeable to him. The creature flew away. The heat increased, situation was intense. The shepherd heard a voice telling him, decide something immediately otherwise you and your flock will perish. In this intense moment of sorrow after a brief moment of reflection he said, take my life, let my flock live. The shepherd fell dead. Suddenly there came up a Green Pasture with streams with free flowing waters, the flock had everything they needed. The writer ends the story with a question like this, Will the Future Humans try to unravel the truth of it at all?

There were 3 reasons why the Jewish Leaders wanted to eliminate Jesus. Firstly, Jesus was a Charismatic Leader who attracted large crowds and many followed him. For any establishment such leaders are a threat. Secondly, Jesus predicted the destruction of Jerusalem Temple. For a Jew it was the centre of their faith. Anyone who speaks against the temple, is a heretic and Jesus’ talk was like an insult to their religious leaders. Thirdly, for the Jewish Leaders whatever Jesus taught and did was wrong, like breaking the Sabbath laws, questioning the system and mixing with the poor, outcast. Jesus was not a victim but was a conscious decision to fulfil His duty. Jesus was giving His life knowingly to fulfil the will of His Father.

This is my commandment: Love one another as I have loved you. There is no greater love than to sacrifice one’s life for one’s friends (Jn.15/12-13).

Today the entire world goes through the memories of Jesus’ tragic death. The ripped alters without any decorations, the day on which the sorrowful sound of the wooden bell, moderation in everything………… Good Friday leads us to a special memory of the tragic incident of human history. The shades of His intense suffering, the cries of the women of Jerusalem, the Lord who is looking for someone to entrust His mother, the insulting crowd…… Amidst all this we call it as GOOD FRIDAY and what really makes it GOOD is the realisation that – For God loved the world so much that He gave His only son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not die but have eternal life (Jn.3/16).

What Jesus taught, He materialised on this day.

Some Real Life Applications of what Jesus did in our times- A Regent Seminarian took his parish Alter servers for a day of picnic. As they were visiting a pond , an alter server fell into the pond which was 20 feet deep and the seminarian jumped into the river to save the boy and in that effort the boy was saved but the seminarian drowned. He was 23 year old son of his parents, at his burial, the preacher said, addressing his parents, “You gave your son to Christ and your son gave himself completely to Christ”. This is the fullness of surrender. There is no greater love than……….. This is what Christ did on the cross on GOOD FRIDAY.

There was a small little girl who was bit naughty with her eating and it was an uphill task for the parent’s every day. That day it was the turn of the father to feed her. He was trying to make her eat, the little one told her father if you promise me something, I will eat. The father replied if your wish does not cost me a fortune, I will. I want to shave my head, said the girl. The mother was against it but the child was adamant and the father asked her to finish her meal thinking that he could later change her mind. But she would not budge, against her mother’s objected he shaved her head. The next day the father took her to the school. As she was getting down from the car, he saw another car, a mother and her daughter about the age of his daughter also came to the parking. She also had a shaven dead. The other child came running to his daughter and the father recognised that they were classmates.

The mother came and asked the father whether she was his daughter and he said, yes. As he finished saying, tears started flowing down from her eyes and words came out, your daughter has a big heart. She said that her daughter was suffering from cancer and due to chemotherapy she lost her hair and she would not go to school and when his daughter came to know she told her that she would also come bald. She told her friend not to stop coming to school. As she said this with folded hands the father stood there without knowing what to say, being so proud of his daughter. There is no grater love………….

Sufferings can be Redeeming and sanctifying, not for all, but for the ones who accept the knowingly and willingly. Father into your hands, I commend my spirit (LK.23/46). Suffering, not out of compulsion or force but surrender in Love.

Good Friday bring into memory once again few striking Reflections-

The people who are responsible are many. One of them is Judas who was greedy for money. Three years of friendship, the love Jesus had for him, nothing mattered before GREED – Beware of Greed. Before we pour guilt on Judas let us see if we have fixed a price for Christ – How many Times? For our benefit, monetary advantage, power and position, how many people we have hurt? Betrayed?

Peter, who for a moment disowned the Master. The times of fear and weakness. The time we fail to recognise God given blessings are opportunities to deny Him. The realisation that if I need to get up, move and to do anything, I need His Blessings, will help us never to deny Him.

Pilate tragically washed his hands though he knew the Truth. History still mocks at his tragic action. He had Jesus in front of him, calm and composed. But still he gave him crown of thorns and death on the cross. He just washed himself away from responsibility. How very often have we escaped from our responsibilities – to our near and dear ones- by this we become a laughing stock for generations to come. Where we lose sight of our humanity, sensitivity to the suffering – we re- enact GOOD FRIDAY.